

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

ADMINISTRATION OF VESZPRÉM DIOCESE
IN THE 18TH CENTURY

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Budapest, 2011

I. Introduction

Investigation of the Veszprém Roman Catholic diocese proceeded side by side with the main trends of Hungarian ecclesiastical historiography. It was János Róka's work that should be mentioned here primarily, which, printed in Pozsony 1779, surveyed the history of the diocese via the bishops' biographies. Kristóf Beke gathered the documents relating to the history of the episcopate during the second half of the 19th century. The episcopacy at the turn of the 19-20th centuries – initiated by baron Károly Hornig bishop, who himself investigated the same topic –, got engaged in the ecclesiastic historical research that has become available lately by the archives of the Vatican being opened. The Roman Records of the Veszprém Episcopacy [*Monumenta Romana Episcopatus Vesprimiensis*] were published between 1896–1907 by József Lukcsics and Vilmos Fraknói, which collection contained not only the sources, but its ample introductions provided information about certain aspects of the medieval history of the diocese. It was around János Pfeiffer and Jenő Gutheil canons that a historical workshop crystallized in the first half of the 20th century. The former unfolded the modern and the early modern period of the episcopate, the latter the medieval ages. The institutionalisation of the workshop was/is due to János Pfeiffer who founded the series *From the past of Veszprém diocese* [*Veszprémi egyházmegye múltjából*]. The series counted 13 volumes from its start in 1933 until its obligate termination in 1949. These bishop-biographies, source-publications, histories of parishes and thematic ecclesiastical works have become fundamental for the history of the diocese. Ecclesiastical historiography, however, corresponding to national tendencies, was restricted from 1949 to the introductory level of diocesan schematisms. Apart from the cited János Pfeiffer and Jenő Gutheil, László Kredics's, József Körmendy's and Pál Rajczi's names should be mentioned in this context. The historical series of the episcopacy was successfully restarted in the second half of the 1980s, when the historical schematism of the diocese, the main work of the late great provost János Pfeiffer, could be eventually published. József Körmendy at the same time was allowed to continue the research at the Vatican. From the 1990s onwards a new generation of ecclesiastical historiographers occurred. Their investigations included the Veszprém episcopate by nature, and their achievements are attested by numerous presentations and publications. Antal Molnár and Tamás Dénesi should

be mentioned here, the latter focusing on the Catholic reform during the 18th century.

The Catholic reform, i.e. the period of the 17th and 18th centuries, from a nationwide perspective can be regarded as a determining age, concerning the investigations of the Catholic church history during the last 20 years, whether on the national or on the local, primarily diocesan level is taken into consideration. Disregard of the sake of completeness it was István Fazekas, Péter Tusor and Antal Molnár who have carried out and organised investigations, the latter of whom conducted the now decade-long research at the Pécs Institution of Ecclesiastical History. Common characteristic of these movements is that they undertake and promote fundamental investigations. One example for this is the data store of monastic orders, which is being assembled by Dániel Siptár, who has also publicated his partial results lately. Another example is the monumental synthesis of the Pécs diocese up to the year of 1543, which was published for the millenium of the episcopacy in 2009. An appendix contained the register of all the diocesan places with churches in medieval times.

Another characteristic of recent investigations during the last two decades is the sensitivity towards social historical issues. Some cases taken at random are the investigations by István Fazekas, who examined the lower orders of the Győr diocese, their ancestral, educational and cultural background based on 17th-century protocols of canonical visitations in the episcopacy. Tamás Dénesi carried out a similar research concerning the Veszprém diocese, although he examined the obscure group of the so-called *licenciati*, the lowest section of the clerical society as well as teachers and other lay auxiliary staff. These investigations were limited as sources, in which these groups appeared, were minimal. The middle class of the ecclesiastical society, namely canons have already been investigated by historians. Tamás Fedeles has recently examined the origins, studies and careers of the medieval members of the Pécs cathedral chapter.

My work is to be observed within the framework of these ecclesiastic historical investigations.

II. Objectives, sources and applied methods

Regardless of the fact that numerous aspects of the early modern history of the Veszprém diocese have been assessed, and source publications as well as the historical schematism assembled by János Pfeiffer have provided solid bases for similar investigations, essays and syntheses have hardly been concerned with the ecclesiastical administration of the episcopacy. Authors, having no eligible foundations, have been obviously neuter in this field. Having reviewed scientific literature, it has become inevitable for me to disclose the administrative units in detail, focusing on one diocese – in this case on the Veszprém diocese for both the investigation of diocesan history and the social historical approach in ecclesiastical history in general. The early modern period has been chosen for such investigation, attaching at the same time to researches in the period of the Catholic reform. This means in terms of the Veszprém diocese that in the 18th century – as the reconstruction of the diocese beginning in the 1630s could achieve a level only after the Ottomans had been pushed out – institutional frames of pastoration could be organised.

A dual objective has been appointed at the beginning. My intentions have been/were to discover and demonstrate the institutional frames of the diocesan administration, i.e. the development and temporal change of the network of parishes and the administrative units within the episcopacy. The other goal has been to introduce the groups that took part in the government of the diocese. By doing so, I have been aware that expected results as fundamental investigations would provide new directions for later ways of researches. Describing the present situation of investigations, with a similee from archeology, my work can be regarded as a „field survey” and its evaluation, by which archeologists decide the places of excavations more accurately. This already closed phase is going to be elaborated here henceforth, apart from some outlooks for desirable researches.

One primarily task has been to assemble a diocesan historical gazetteer which contains the changes in the ecclesiastical administrative structure. The procedure eventually – as printed diocesan schematisms were available from 1795, whereas hand-written ones from 1785 –, consisted of two steps, the main difference between them being the sources and their data. On the one hand, from 1785 onwards there have

been uniform and regular assemblies providing official data, whereas on the other hand, no similar sources were available for the preceding period. For this latter period diocesan conscriptions for different purposes proved to be useful from the Veszprém Episcopal Archives (in the Veszprém Archiepiscopal Archdiocesan Archives), from the Székesfehérvár Episcopal Archives (in the Székesfehérvár Episcopal and Chapter Archives), and the Cassa parochorum in the Council of Governor-general (*Consilium Regium Locumtenentiale Hungaricum* – now in the Hungarian National Archives). These conscriptions can be sorted into eight temporal cross-sections: 1726, 1728, 1732/33, 1735, 1745/49, 1757, 1770/71 and 1778/79. Data available from these sources have been the frame for the gazetteer.

By assembling this gazetteer it has become inevitable for me to pay attention to the diocesan archontology in order to achieve solid results. The original plan was to make use of János Pfeiffer's historical schematism, but collecting the data of deans and canons was convincing that it was expedient and necessary to gather all possible data concerning priests in the diocese. This, however, has provided limits for the task in the first phase, as it could have been rather time-consuming. The requirement of being fully comprehensive concerning places and persons has resulted in the fact that a time-limit for the investigation had to be drawn at 1777. This corresponds on the one hand to the prospective of administrative history as Transdanubian dioceses were reorganized this year, and on the other hand, it has orientated me to the previously mentioned changes in the nature of sources.

As a control, a test for extended later investigations, a register has also been assembled for the middle level of ecclesiastical administration, i.e. for the system of decanates for the period between 1795 and 1949.

The completed gazetteer and the archontology, the latter based on the level of parishes, has proved to be proper for the already mentioned „field survey”. This part of my work can be regarded as a topographical reconstruction concerning geographic-historical investigations, which may be observed as an intermedial phase, according to Tibor Mendöl, between assembling the data and a geographic-historical summary. By doing so, the data of the gazetteer in different groupings have resulted in a map demonstrating settlement boundaries of the 1770s,¹ and by virtue of these maps, an attempt has been made to reconstruct and interpret the changes in the network of parishes and the middle level of administration.

¹ The fundamental map was made by Béla Nagy, who has unselfishly given it to my disposal.

Data from the mentioned conscriptions, edited from contemporary ecclesiastical administrative sources of the Veszprém Episcopal Archives, have formed the shell of the archontological assemblage. Surveying certain noble proprietors' family archives from specific aspects and that of some significant parochial archives have contributed to this process. Among others, archives of the Batthyány, Széchényi and Zichy families – all kept in the Hungarian National Archives now – and that of the Adony, Vál, Veszprém and Zsámbék parishes have been surveyed. This phase of my work emphasized the importance of family archives of proprietors – as patrons contrasted to the rather fragmentary parochial archives, including matricules as well – which has proved to be much less useful for assembling the archontology than documents of church government.

Based on the archontological and prosopographical collection of persons, the latter partly made upon János Pfeiffer's historical schematism and its data concerning some certain categories (e.g. origins, studies), those groups of people have been surveyed from the prospective of ecclesiastical administration, who actually took part in the government of the diocese.

III. Main results of the investigation

One permanent requisite of the scientific literature, dealing with the diocesan history in the early modern period, is a reference to the destruction and reconstruction of the parish network. One basic source for this is Márton Biró of Padány's itemized report sent to Rome in 1758, in which the bishop gave an account of the parishes in his diocese marking their founding year as well. This report was the base of that conception, which presented Márton Biró of Padány as the main contributor of the diocesan reconstruction between 1745 and 1762. His counter-example was his predecessor, Ádám Acsádi, who was the bishop of Veszprém between 1725 and 1744. Literature depicts the former as a strenuous church-organiser, whereas the latter is represented as a clerk mainly dealing with his chancellory obligations and living distant from his diocese in his early years, and as a sickling prelate from the 1730s residing in Pápa, still outside his episcopacy. The synthesis and its results concerning parish organizations about one of

their predecessors, Ottó János Volkra, also emphasizes this contrast by presenting him as an arduous prelate, who, albeit, was bishop for only a decade between 1710 and 1720. Yet he is a match to Márton Biró of Padány.

All these conclusions had been deducted without reconstruction of the parish network. This contradiction was noticed by Tamás Dénesi, but he returned no answer to this issue as the goal and method of his investigation made that unavailable.

An attempt is made here to outline the change of the parish network and to determine its dynamics between 1710 and 1777. It has become shortly unambiguous that the report of 1758 as a basic source was inaccurate enough concerning the data of the parishes to draw such conclusions. At the same time, investigation of the whole parish-system has highlighted that its changes had no close connection with the governing bishop. This means not the disputation of Márton Biró Padány's role, but rather the underlying reasons behind the dynamics of parish-organisation. This idea is strengthened by the following facts: Ottó János Volkra died in 1720, vacancy occurred in the episcopal seat and the short provisional episcopacy of Imre Esterházy made no influence over the intensity of the reconstruction. The flare of the parish-network in the first decade of Ádám Acsádi's episcopacy continued without hesitation in rhythm, although the prelate was seated in Vienna because of his chancellory appointment.

The decline in this flare in the middle of the 1730s was due to the exhausted situation of the diocese, meaning financial and the personnel's numeric limits. The significant change in denominational circumstances may also have influenced the decline, which originated from the earlier parish-foundational process. The change in denominational proportions was a longer process, and the density of the Catholic ecclesiastical organization-texture had presumably reached its maximum by the second half of the 1730s. A flare with the same rhythm could not be initiated from this prospective.

The second wave of parish-organisation began in the mid-1740s, which coincided with the episcopacy of Márton Biró of Padány. His energetic personality undoubtedly strengthened and accelerated the process, yet the conditions for the flare originated from the changes within the diocese. Márton Biró of Padány's one major contribution was the foundation of the diocesan seminar, a fact that, again, was supported by other factors as well. A prerequisite for this was the ample number

of applicants, which was due to the sufficient pastoral work at the parishes, which, in this context, was the result of the earlier process of parish-network organization. Another factor was an adverse tendency, the insenscence of the diocesan clergy.

Sources suggest that historians' later valuation, which assessed the success – at least in this period of a bishop – by the number of newly erected parishes trace back to contemporary roots. The number of the converted meant a clear means of assessment for contemporaries of the parochial work in case of pastoring clergy. A tally for this on the prelates' level was parish-organisation, including resizing temples and eliminating Protestant chaplains from communities. Ádám Acsádi proposed monumental plans for the development of the parish network. The examination of the plan shows that planned parishes answered real challenges of the parish network, but the timing, however, made them unexecutable. Many parishes that were founded this time (e.g. Felsőörs, Lepsény) proved to be incapable of living. These unsuccessful attempts for contemporaries, including perhaps the bishop himself as well, meant personal failure.

Earlier research turned little attention towards administrative units within the diocese apart from the change in the parish network. Assembling the gazetteer and the archontology has made the drawing of an image of the former change available. The definition of administrative units had to be made first. The investigation has showed that no archdeaconates existed in Veszprém diocese at this time, consequently no archdeacons were appointed. Contemporaries regarded archdeaconates only as „calculative units“, more or less corresponding to secular counties that formed the diocese. The Zala and Somogy archdeaconates meant exclusively these counties, and the cathedral archdeaconate coincided with the historical Veszprém county together with certain parts of Zala and Fejér counties. The fourth archdeaconate, however, which had earlier been regarded as Buda, later as Fehérvár archdeaconate, included the major part of county Fejér and the Transdanubian Pilis region of Pest-Pilis-Solt county.

The middle level of the ecclesiastical administration was the deaconate. The changes in the system of these districts corresponded to that of the parish network, yet at the same time personal conditions on this administrative level influenced and modified the speed of change, generating significant differences between the network of deaconates and parishes.

Investigation of the middle level demonstrated that remarkable distinctions between dioceses could be made in ecclesiastical administration and its operation. Detailed contrasts, however, have not been carried out, nevertheless, it can be established that results can not be extended and generalized to neighbouring and similar dioceses, for instance, to the diocese of Pécs, not to mention further ones.

People taking part in the government of the diocese are examined in the second half of this paper. It was the vicar who held the most important directing role within the episcopacy. Surviving correspondence suggests that the vicar was not exclusively an executor of the bishop's intention. Moreover, he played an active, sometimes initiating role in appointments for parishes, in management of conflicts between the clergy and either the flock or the patrons (meaning the second grade after the level of deaconates, and in structural changes including foundation of parishes and changes of decanal districts. The vicar independently presided the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. His importance was also strengthened by the fact that bishops in most cases dwelled not in their episcopal seat, Veszprém, but for the diocese's prospect a more peripheric town, in Sümeg – although these two settlements carried almost the same weight in Márton Biró of Padány itinerary for the 1740s. Nevertheless, this latter fact may have changed during over the years. The vicar in all cases, however, resided in Veszprém. These accounts about vicars' independence are justified for all the vicars in the period, whereas literature attributed this to Márton Biró of Padány's struggle or merit. Emphases may obviously vary one by one, but sources do not imply that Márton Biró of Padány as vicar or bishop acted differently.

Vicars in all cases belonged to the members of the chapter, which fact canalised the focus to this body. It was only provosts that were not appointed by the bishops. This practice of promotion revealed the bishops' intentions to allocate their supporters in the chapter. As appointment to the chapter lasted lifelong, episcopal decisions were influenced by demographical reasons. This meant a tangible objection in the first decade of Márton Biró of Padány's episcopacy, when no canonical prebend became vacant, thus there was no possibility for him to promote his colleagues into the chapter. The prelate made several attempts to solve the situation. In order to expand his vicar's prestige, the bishop made an unsuccessful attempt in 1747 to rearrange prebends within the chapter. Two years later four rural deans were appointed as honourable canons, which title had not existed previously in the diocese. Three out

of the four promoted became members of the chapter as prebends later fell vacant. The bishop's final attempt to reward one of his colleagues took place in the mid-1750s, whereby the title of archdeaconate of Székesfehérvár was granted to a dean. Following 1755, when prebends fell vacant one after the other providing ample opportunity for the bishop to reward his meritorious priests, there was no necessity for Márton Biró of Padány to make use of extraordinary practice. Canonical prebends were not attempted to be rearranged any more, and the title of archdeaconate was not reanimated either. Contrasted to this, the title of honourable canons proved to be permanent until 1777, the end of the period. Appointment and use of the title, however, stopped after 1777. The reason behind its longevity may have been the fact that the title proved to be suitable as a link between deaconates and the chapter for meritorious deans, as a reward for their life-work, and at the same time to unclioister those, whom the bishop intended to employ in the diocesan government. These two groups are rather distinctive among honourable canons.

The third investigated level has been that of the deans administering the districts. Deans have been examined as the second line of the chapter. By doing so, some successful and unsuccessful careers have been demonstrated.

Results of the investigation of those people who played some role in diocesan government have been contrasted to the images of Győr and Pécs episcopacies, which were formulated by scientific literature, more precisely by the image that Vince Bedy and Tamás Fedeles have presented/presented. The situation in the Győr diocese differed from that of Veszprém, as the Ottoman conquest had hardly affected hardly affected its territory, thus the ecclesiastical structure was much less destroyed there than in Veszprém, and consequently the Catholic reform could swiftly eventualize. In case of the Pécs diocese, however, similarities to Veszprém were significant and differences at the same time were more extant. On a main difference was that the whole diocese belonged to the conquered territory, which meant that the diocese together with its seat were under Ottoman rule from the mid-16th century to the late 17th. Taking these into consideration, it was unexpected to establish that the composition of Győr and Pécs leading clergy (i.e. bishops and chapters) and the origins of changes in the chapters show significant similarities to each other and at the same time, show remarkable differences to that of Veszprém. Extradiocesan persons were promoted

in all the three episcopacies to canonical prebends. Promotions of such people, however, can be regarded as a continuous practice in case of Győr and Pécs, whereas their proportions in case of Veszprém was a declining phenomenon and it was in 1745 that the last extradiocesan priest was appointed for a prebend. A more detailed investigation of extradiocesan promotions have revealed other differences as well. The promoted persons in cases of both Győr and Pécs were of non-Hungarian origins, and many of them did not move to the diocese, not even after their appointment. This means that their presence did not prove to be lucrative for the bishop for ecclesiastical governmental purposes. It can also be demonstrated that either the monarch or some eminent patrons' intervenial support resulted in their promotion. Contrasted to this, in the Veszprém chapter no canons had non-Hungarian origins, and a close association with the bishop is presumable, and this presumption is supported by the canons' later career. All the newly appointed canons moved to the diocese and highlighting the close connection between the prebendary and the bishop, they took substantial part in the diocesan government as vicars.

This significant difference in canonical promotions emphasizes the role of the chapter in diocesan clerical career, which was seemingly not general in the period. By receiving promotion to the chapter members from the decanal level, the latter with some exceptions had earlier functioned as priest, opportunity of emergence opened for a certain part of diocesan clergy. However, the possibility to a progress, to a clerical career provided a restful elderly age to only a limited number. The chapter with six, and from 1767 onwards with seven members, and the eleven districts with the corresponding number of deans formed a rather small group.

The paper also contains the gazetteer of the Veszprém diocese between 1726 and 1779, and the archontology between 1700 and 1777.

IV. Possible further investigations

The present position of investigations has been equalled as a „field survey“. This means that important points are those that draw attention to possible directions of historical investigation that apply new sources. Some issues are the following. One of these is the shift in denominational proportions, the topic of changing denominations, which correlates with the ecclesiastical system, more precisely with the change of the parish network. Regional differences within the diocese are also to be examined, where the distinct situation of Somogy county is to be noted. And finally, a reference is to be made again to the administrative differences to dioceses, which may be worthy of further investigations. Assembling the gazetteer, the archontology and interim experimental temporal discourses justified the theorem that investigations of a longer period of time are necessary not only to comprehend changes but sometimes to perceive them at all. Investigations should be expanded spatially, concerning especially the 19th century. This assumes, however, such a groupwork that an example of Pécs has provided.

V. Publications concerning the subject matter of the dissertation

Esperesi kerületek változásai a veszprémi római katolikus egyházmegyében (az 1720-as évektől 1777-ig), [*Changes of decanal districts within the Veszprém Roman Catholic Diocese (from 1720s to 1777)*] *A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 25 (2008) [2009] 143–177.

A veszprémi székeskáptalan személyi összetétele 1700 és 1777 között [*Personal composition of the Veszprém chapter between 1700 and 1777*], in: HERMANN István, KARLINSZKY Balázs [szerk.], *Megyetörténet, Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére*, Veszprém, 2010. (A Veszprém Megyei Levéltár kiadványai 22. / A veszprémi egyházmegye múltjából 22.) 179–225.

Die Rolle der Pauliner bei der Katholisierung der Stadt Pápa in der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts. [*The role of the Pauline order in the Catholicization process of the city Pápa in the mid-17th century.*] Elhangzott a Bettelorden im Mitteleuropa, Geschichte, Kunst, Spiritualität konferencián St. Pöltenben, 2007. március 20-án.

A veszprémi egyházmegye vezető rétege a 18. században. [*Leading clergy of the Veszprém diocese in the 18th century*] Elhangzott a Veszprémi egyházmegye és a megyerendszer első okleveles említésének millenniuma tiszteletére rendezett konferencián Veszprémben, 2009. szeptember 17-én.